INDIA'S NO.1 PREGNANCY, BABY & TODDLER MAGAZINE

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Mother & Baby

COMFORT AND JOY

Recipes for a very merry Christmas

FASHION FORWARD

The ultimate party lookbook for the apple of your eye

EATING HEALTHY

Pregnancy party-food guide

PARTY TIME

New mommy guilt can wait

ISSUE FOCUS

Party like a rockstar!

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ACTOR

Smriti Khanna

ON BOUNCING BACK FROM BABY BLUES

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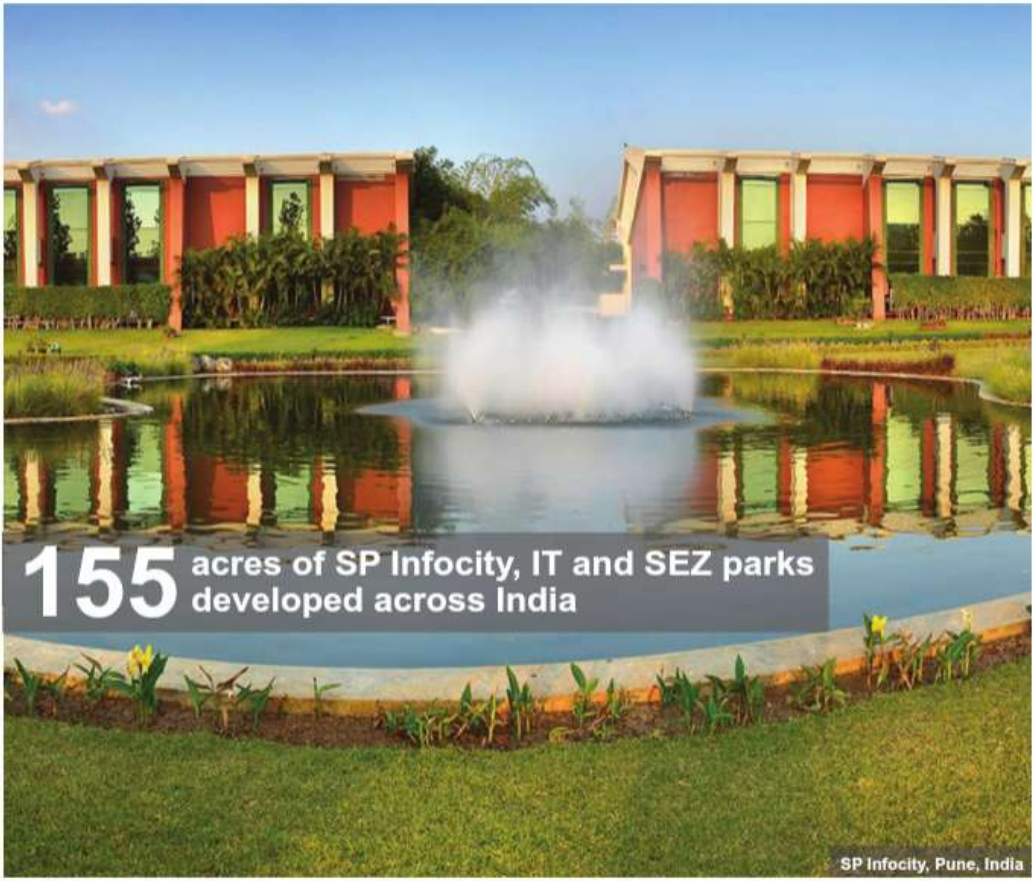

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CONTENTS

On the cover: Smriti Khanna with her daughter Anayka Vivaan Shorey Tejwani Hair: Nikita Dave Makeup: Deepti Bathija Backdrop: Plush by J

In every issue

EDIT NOTE 7
From us to you
M&B PANEL 8
Our team of experts
PREGNANCY DIARIES 9
Your guide from bump to birth
MAMA OF THE MONTH 10
November's spotlight mum-to-be
POSTER 11
M&B's cutie of the month
LETS TALK 12
Social media moments we love
ADD TO CART 14
Handy products at the click of a button

World of Mums

COVER MUM 18
Smriti Khanna on the highs and
COMFORT & JOY 28
Recipes for a very Merry Christmas
HOW TO 36
Ensure your tot is well-behaved at the next do
MUM WITH A PLAN 38
Planning a kiddie party minus the big bucks

Mum's award 2021

Inviting nominations for the following categories

- Breast Pump
- Car Seat
- High Chair
- Safety Brand
- Baby Toiletries
- Pregnancy Apparel
- Kids Apparel
- Nursery Products
- Best Investment For The Future
- Mommy Care Products
- Best Retail Store Chain
- Taped Diapers
- Pant Style Diapers
- Baby Stroller
- Baby Toy
- Toddler Toy
- Baby Utilities
- Online Retailer/ E-Commerce
- Baby Wipes
- Organic Toddler Food
- Sustainable Product

Email: mbeditorial@gmail.com
(mention 'Mum's award 2021' in subject line)

CONTENTS

Bump & Beyond

TESTING TIMES 42
Medical examinations before you start trying
THE 10 COMMANDMENTS 44
.....of a safe, happy and healthy pregnancy
EXPERT SPEAK 46
Party food do's and don'ts with a bump
SAFE AND SNUG 48
Tips to choosing the right baby blanket

Little Ones

FASHION FORWARD 52
Party in style with these trendy outfits
FEED HIM HEALTHY 66
Immunity-boosting foods for the apple of your eye
'O CHRISTMAS TREE 69
DIY Christmas tree to keep them occupied
STARSTRUCK 73
What's in store for your little darling this month

Swati Chopra Vikamsey
Editor

It is paaarty time!

Sure, the risk of COVID still lingers. But both you and your little ones have been isolated far way too long, and it's time to slowly transition back to normal life in whatever capacity it is possible with minimal risk and exposure.

And normally, year-need festivities spell P-A-R-T-Y!

And no, being a mum (or an expectant mum) need not be a buzz kill. Yes, there is some amount of caution needed there, but pregnancy can be a fun time for festivities too! Just watch what you're eating! Oh, and about that, do check out some amazing Christmas treats that you could whip up at home.

Have a look-see at the adorable party outfits for your tyke, as you also learn how to ensure that he is at his very best behaviour socially!

Well, things may not go exactly to plan. But, isn't that what being mum is all about? Read actor Smriti Khanna's heart-moving story about how her life's plan was thrown out of gear due to postpartum depression. She fought back, and came back a winner... hopefully not very different from the social scene post-COVID

Swati

Visual: Akshay Kulkarni; Hair & Makeup: Sachin Gathe

Mother&Baby

Panel of Experts

DR KIRAN COELHO
A succesful gynaecologist and practicing obgyn for the last 30 years.

DR DHERANDRA KUMAR
Consultant clinical and child psychologist, he is founder and director of Psyindia, and engaged in direct work with children.

DR ANITA MADAN
A doctorate in education, she is currently the Curriculum Development head with EuroKids International Pvt Ltd where she promotes a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

SONALI SHIVLANI
Mumbai-based childbirth educator, certified by Childbirth & Postpartum Professional Association, USA.

DR GEETANJALI SHAH
Popular Mumbai paediatrician, conducts holistic fitness workshops for pregnant women.

ANIKA PURI
Childbirth educator, prenatal and postnatal massage therapist, certified counsellor, reflexologist and a holistic practitioner of women's health and fertility in Delhi.

NUTAN PANDIT
Breastfeeding counsellor and natural birth therapist who's been teaching in New Delhi since 1978.

EFFATH YASMIN
India's leading IBCLC, biodynamic craniosacral therapist, and founder of Nourish & Nurture, Mumbai, India.

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Picture Researcher Kirsty McNeil

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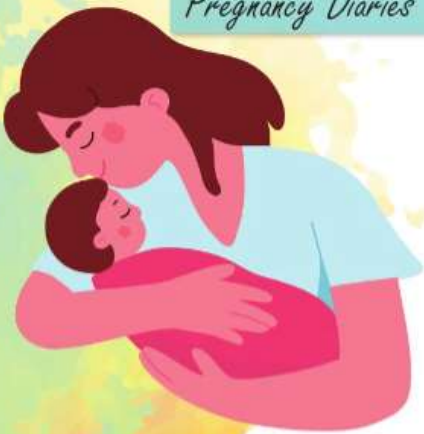
Editor Swati Chopra Vikamsey

MILKING IT

While breastfeeding, assuming a position that allows the mother to rest along with her baby keeps both calm and peaceful. Biological Nurturing position where baby is lying supported by mother's body while mother is reclining works best for comfort, peace and restfulness. During such a process, the baby slowly dozes off while feeding. Therefore, babies who are growing well on exclusive direct breastfeeding falling asleep at the breast is normal and desirable.



Keep Calm..

Marjaryasana

- Start on all fours.
- Inhale as you arch your spine, lower your belly, and gaze upward.
- Exhale as you draw your chin into chest and arch your spine upward.
- Continue this gentle flow for up to one minute.

Benefits: This backbend relieves tension, improves spinal mobility, and boosts circulation.

- Shikha Pai, founder, Yoga Belle

Word of the Wise..

"She never quite leaves her children at home, even when she doesn't take them along."

-Margaret Culkin Banning

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Superfood of the month

SUNFLOWER SEEDS

Sunflower seeds contain around 90% of all vitamins including phytochemicals, protein, minerals, antioxidants and polyunsaturated fats - so they're an excellent pregnancy food. Phytochemicals help to improve your immune system, which is often weakened during pregnancy as your body is working extra hard to sustain your li'l one. The seeds are also a great source of phosphorous, which aids the growth & strength of your baby's bones.

To be featured, write in to mbeditorial@gmail.com

Aww Moments

Mother&Baby

MOMMY OF THE MONTH
Tanya

Mother&Baby

CUTIE OF THE MONTH

Kayaan

Visuals: Falguni Kharwa

Digital Backdrop: Sasha Chomakov

motherandbabyindia Social media moments we ♥

GIVE US A SHOUTOUT!

Got something to say? Wanna feature on our social pages? We're all ears, mamas! Holler at mbeditorial@gmail.com for social media collabs, and other enquiries

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For product-related queries visit www.sophielagirafe.in, or write in to hello@hayabello-distribution.com

Hi Team,
I've been reading your magazines ever since I was pregnant with my baby girl Naina. I remember feeling so lost, and not being able to understand what was going on with my body and how to handle the changes. That's when my sister gifted me a Mother & Baby subscription, and it completely turned things around. So thank you for being there for me when I needed it the most!
NIRALI PANDYA, BENGALURU

Dear Nirali,
Thank you for turning to us in your time of need. We understand that this could be a tricky time in your life, and we aim to hold your hand through it all. Thanks for writing in, and much love to you and baby Naina – Swati understand the challenges the pandemic brings, especially being a first-time mum, and we're here to hold your hand through it all.
Much love! - Swati

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Price: ₹1,150/ 15ML
Availability: www.dermaessentia.com

SHINE BRIGHT LIKE A DIAMOND!

This party season, dazzle the night away with Entice's enchanting line of diamond jewellery. The range is lightweight and crafted for the quintessential modern woman. Each diamond-studded creation, brought to life through state-of-the-art designing. Translating classic shapes into works of art, this distinct collection boasts a classic interplay of white diamonds and pure yellow/rose gold. Also part of the range is an elegant studded band, chunky ear studs, cluster pendants and delicate necklaces set in 18 carat/14 carat yellow/rose gold. The meticulous setting of emerald and round-cut pure white diamonds renders a mesmerising effect like no other. Diamonds really are a mum's best friend!
Price: On request
Availability: www.entice.in

Corrigendum
With reference to the product reviews titled 'Drive Safe', 'Baby on Wheels' and 'Sweet Dreams' pertaining to the November '21 issue, Mother & Baby published these products as belonging to Joie. We would like to clarify that Maxi Cosi Mica 360 and Maxi Cosi Zelia2 belong to the brand Maxi Cosi, while Tiny Love 3-in-1 Rocker Nappy is a Tiny Love product. We regret the error.

WONDER WOMAN!

The Woman's Company, together with Facebook Creative Shop and Play Communications, has launched 'The Compassionate Pad,' the world's first pad designed for women suffering from pregnancy loss. In tandem, the pad also provides access to a messaging bot—Tender —a compassionate, virtual friend, connects women experiencing this inexplicable loss (and the people supporting her) to a qualified panel of specialists like gynaecologists, counsellors, *doulas*, fitness and nutrition professionals to get expert guidance and support. Via Tender, women can also access stories of women in the community who have experienced pregnancy loss and hear from them how they coped with it. The resources include fact-checked and verified information, advice and community support all via the touch of a button, in a completely safe and confidential format. People can connect to the Tender Bot via Facebook Messenger, Facebook, Instagram, the website and from the packaging of the 'Compassionate Pad' itself, via a dynamic QR code. The Pad is an extra-long, biodegradable pad which has multiple layers for additional absorbency, made of super-soft cotton, and ergonomically designed. It is the newest addition to the product line currently offered by The Woman's Company.
Price: ₹399
Availability: www.thewomanscompany.com

'HAIR' FOR YOU

Presenting the complete hair-care package; Amrutam's Kuntal Care Hair Oil. The oil is made using natural ingredients like *neem*, *kapoor kachri*, *gudhal* and *balchad*. *Neem* helps in preventing dandruff, promotes the growth of new hair, thickens hair and reverses greying. On the other hand, *kapoor kachri* is a good source of antioxidants which helps in preventing damage and strengthens the hair. The powder also has a soothing scent which helps in relaxing and improving blood circulation. The *Gudhal* extract, known as hibiscus in English, is widely known for its hair strengthening properties and also rejuvenates the scalp to make your hair look thicker, healthier and shinier. *Balchad* directly acts upon the roots of the hair to prevent hair loss and strengthens it from within.
Pour a liberal amount of the oil on your hands and gently massage onto the scalp. Let the oil sit for thirty minutes before washing it off.
Price: ₹599 (200ml)
Availability: www.amrutam.co.in

ROCK-A-BYE BABY

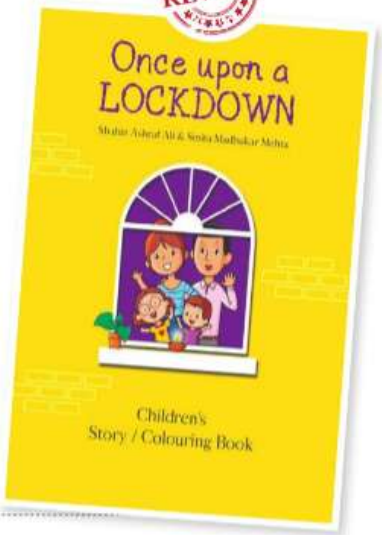
Keep your li'l one safe and snug with Mastela'a 6 in 1 multi-function bassinet. Suitable for usage from birth to three years, the product features a removable music and vibration unit, and soothes baby with multiple melodies. The removable bassinet can also be used on bed or used as infant earner. To ensure your tot's safety, it comes with a three-point harness and detachable canopy with integrated mosquito net for shade and serenity. The unique mesh sides for breathable comfort and for mum to keep a close eye. It can be adjusted to three different height options and reclined in three positions. The soft mattress keeps baby cosy and the unique foldable frame collapses for easy storage. The bassinet also features storage pockets to keep baby's necessities within reach.
Price: ₹12,999
Availability: www.amazon.in, www.firstcry.com

ROAD TRIP-READY

Your newest travel companion is Maxi Cosi's Tinca car seat, made specially for your li'l passenger. The lightweight accessory meets the highest European safety standards. It comes with a large UV protective sun canopy along with a newborn inlay to add safety and comfort. Adjustable headrests and additional head and neck protection ensures your baby has a smooth ride. The seat is easy to install in the car and has removable and machine-washable cover so that it can stay clean and spotless for your tiny traveller.
Price: ₹29,999
Availability: www.amazon.in, www.firstcry.com

REVIEW

Once Upon A Lockdown



Once upon a lockdown, by Shahin Ashraf Ali and Smita Madhukar Mehta, is an attractive multipurpose children's book. It is a coloring-cum-story book which can be used as a read-aloud too. And most importantly, while the young reader is engaged in any of the activity—coloring, reading or listening to the story, the parent or a caregiver can initiate conversation in a child appropriate way, about the greatest challenge of our time—living with the new virus around. The story explores how positivity, a loving support system and confidence can make everything better—even the challenges of a worldwide pandemic. It is a compassionate and straightforward story to help children navigate masks and other safety protocols that arose during the COVID-19 wave. Using Once upon a lockdown, parents can enable their li'l ones to understand why some measures are mandatory for staying safe and healthy as well as guiding them through possible changes in routine during a pandemic.
This unique pictorial book with beautiful pictures to color in, empowers and inspires young readers to express their emotions and believe in themselves. Its vocabulary is developmentally appropriate for a young audience. The designer of the book, Rohan Chandrashekar, deserves a shout out for the appealing child-friendly layout of the book. Once upon a lockdown is indeed an excellent resource for families with young children
navigating life in challenging times.
Price: ₹170
Availability: www.notionpress.com

STROLL AWAY!

Perfect for evening strolls in the park, Maxi Cosi's Adorra2 is a must-have for every newborn. Suitable from birth to four years with multiple recline positions, it comes with a comfy seat with extra padding and breathable mesh fabric. It also features a reversible breathable seat liner, an extendable hood with peek-a-boo window and adjustable leg rest. The five-point safety harness comes with a magnetic buckle and includes a rain cover and shopping basket. The stroller also comes with an easy brake system, removable bumper bar and allows for compact folding for easy storage.
Price: ₹89,999
Availability: www.amazon.in, www.firstcry.com

Beating Baby Blues

Actor and influencer, Smriti Khanna wears her heart on her sleeve, as she lets us in on the good times and the bad, playing mommy to 1.7 year-old Anayka

Coordination Krisselle Fonseca
Visual Shruti Tejwani
Hair Nikita Dave
Makeup Dimple Bathija
Backdrop Plush by J

With a bevy of critically acclaimed TV shows under her belt, actor Smriti Khanna quickly became a household name in the telly world. Behind the scenes, Smriti is a girl about town, and with her new role as mommy to Anayka, she certainly has her hands full. Although her social media provides a substantial glimpse into her parenting journey, our chat with her unveils a side like never seen before. In an M&B exclusive, Smriti looks back at how far she's come, and looks forward to what lies ahead, with baby A.

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IT'S BABY TIME!

"Ever heard of the saying, 'A child who knows unconditional love, has the greatest gift the world can offer.' That's the kind of love my family is capable of giving, and that's what made me want to have Anayka. Every time a child was expected to visit us, the whole family went bananas! The preparations and arrangements were beyond what I can possibly express. There was so much excitement in the air for that tiny human, and it was such a heart-warming sight to see—witnessing this over and over, how could I not want to have one of my own? This family too, deserved a child of their own. Moreover, my baby would be born into such a selfless, large-hearted family with so much love to give, and a family that would always put her first.

"I guess even the universe sensed our eagerness to have a baby, and when my husband Gautam and I started trying, we conceived almost immediately. Although it was a planned pregnancy, I felt too many emotions when we found out—anxiousness and excitement, with a whole lotta' happy tears rolling out of my eyes. Gautam, on the other hand, didn't know how to react because he thought I was crying out of unhappiness about the news. So, out of fear that he might upset me even more, he wasn't sure about showing his excitement! We still laugh every time we think about that moment. "Despite all the excitement surrounding this new baby, I also understood what I was putting at stake, when it came to my career. Being an actor is demanding—the schedules are packed and time consuming. I wanted to be a hands-on mum, and 'all in' during my baby's early days. I was mentally prepared to be a mum, and so I made the decision to take a break in my career as an actor.

BUMP TO BIRTH

"During my pregnancy, I always looked forward to my doctor's visits and sonographies. Those were such special times to me. I would look at the scans for days after each sonography. I read a lot about the different stages in pregnancy and get weekly updates on the baby's growth, etc. With the internet literally in our hands 24/7, it was quite simple to look up and get answers to most of our doubts. Between us, Gautam took it upon himself to educate both of us about the whole process, while also seeking expert advice. He was always present for all our medical appointments. It was as though he auto-updated his already impeccable organisational skills.

"He closely monitored my health, and made sure that all my meals were nutritious. He even came for regular walks with me. Research and learning brought so many things to our notice that we otherwise wouldn't think of. We learned about how a perineal massage around the 36th week can do wonders at the time of delivery. We understood the importance of having our hospital bag ready in time. Most importantly, as parents-in-the-making, we felt that it was extremely critical to be on the same page about out birth plan and the what if's. So this was discussed well in advance. My pregnancy had so many magical moments wrapped up in these nine months, but the most memorable was when Anayka kicked for the first time in the uterus. I was in the movie theatre watching this movie called 'Good news'. How ironic is that!

"On this journey of educating ourselves, we came across so many myths that are still believed and followed, without any explanation. We tried to debunk a lot of them via constant communication with followers through our Instagram handles. Followers equal fame, and fame equals responsibility. We always went with a mindset that if we could change even one person's perception, it would mean bringing a change in the entire family—and that was a tremendous power to hold.

"Everything went as we planned, and all our research and preparations really equipped us with so much information that we were confident going into D-day. However, despite all our forward thinking, nothing truly prepared us for labour pain. Oh, the pain! When it started, it was beyond imagination and felt like it was never going to end. But when it did, Anayka came into this world. The rest, as they say, is history. The moment I held her in my arms for the first time, I forgot all the pain, and if I had to, I would do it all over again! I was so overcome with emotion that she was finally here. I remember just breaking down when they put her on me for the first time. You read about this moment in the books and have a rough idea through fellow mums' experiences, but only when you experience it for yourself do you realise how big it really is.

WHEN LOVE TAKES TIME

"In my opinion, Gautam is genetically wired to love babies. His sensitivity towards kids got him instantly attached to Anayka, right from when she was in my womb. I, on the other hand, took quite some time to come to terms with it. I'm not ashamed of admitting that it wasn't love at first sight for me. While Gautam rode high on emotions, my practical approach kept me sane. After all, each person copes in their own way. I was never head over heels in love with children. I loved playing with them for a while and that's about it. I never 'longed' to be a mum. While I was over the moon when Anayka was born, in the initial days, it did not seem as glorious as I thought it would be. The feeling of being a 'mum' sinked in long after, and I did not try to force it. And when that 'feeling' finally came on, man, I fell in love so hard... each day, a little more. Initially, it was more of a need for caregiving, and to be able to be around when she needed me. However, with every passing day, this love grew and a very different kind of love—something you only experience when you become a mum—came to fore.

BABY BLUES

"Even though we've progressed as a society, we don't discuss postpartum depression enough. It is a very real and devastating thing to go through. It is that sinking feeling where you live your life round the clock with the baby, appear normal outside but on the inside, drown into that dark place, little by little. I would sob all day at the tiniest of things. Despite travelling and being physically, socially and mentally active, being cooped up in the house with fear hit me hard. I felt like I was on this constant roller coaster of emotions, while also dealing with my hormones going out of whack, post-delivery. All I wanted to do was cry—when the baby cried, or even otherwise!

"I have always believed in 'quality over quantity'. You can spend hours and hours with your li'l one, but being grumpy and sulky will only engulf her into this inexplicable sadness, and make her cranky. However, giving her even 15 minutes of quality time, where you're truly in the moment, is more valuable. This is something that I struggled with. I wanted to be fully present with her, and I just hit a roadblock. And just when I thought it couldn't get any worse, I tested positive for COVID when Anayka was 6.5 months. I was so terrified—what if I pass this to Anayka, what if my other family members get it. This fear got the best of me, and I stopped breastfeeding her even when the doctors advised otherwise. It was total chaos, physically and mentally.

"If it weren't for the unwavering support I received from my family, I can't even imagine how things would have turned out. Being in a loving, joint family, with multiple hands to take care of Anayka when I needed my own space, helped me recover sooner than I expected. I took my time to process the emotions that I felt and slowly but surely, I was healing physically and emotionally. Within no time, I even managed to get back to work, while Anayka enjoyed all the pampering from her grandparents and uncle. COVID restrictions kept everyone home, and made it possible for Gautam to spend a lot of time with her. It was an overwhelming experience for him too, to see her grow so closely and be a part of her journey.

"Going through this experience made me realise how important it is to trust the people you leave your baby with. They're the ones you'll need when the going gets tough, when you're out there hustling like a boss, or when you're too engulfed with emotion to give it your best while caring for your li'l baby. Besides, that trust liberates them to be around the baby stress-free, and let them give their best to her too.

DREAM GIRL

"Anayka is naughty in her own ways, but an extremely obedient kid. She's calm and almost never cries, which was quite shocking for people around us, including myself! She met very limited people due to the lockdown, so she was a bit reserved by nature, but is now opening up to new faces. She's kind and soft-hearted, and always ready to share her things with anyone who asks.

"I'm an extremely hard-working person who always believed that every person has the power to write their own destiny. When Anayka came into my life and I finally felt that special bond and love between us, somewhere, I knew this was Karmic. I now believe that she was destined to be my baby and bless me with this joy and bliss, unlike anything I've ever experienced before.

"Motherhood has been a testing yet beautiful journey that I have embarked upon. I've seen the good and the bad, and I cannot wait to see how it unfolds for me and Anayka. I've been through a rough patch, and thought it would be something I'd never overcome, but I emerged on the brighter side of that experience. I feel more empowered and stronger than ever. I don't think I would have discovered this side of myself, had it not been for motherhood. My baby is so little, and yet, she's taught me so much. From struggling to build a connection, to feeling a special kind of love that no measure of words could express, I find myself more humble, compassionate, and vulnerable, yet strong and rooted.

"Like any other mum I just want her to grow up to be a good human being, which I consider the greatest achievement in today's times. I truly believe that kindness and compassion are the biggest strengths a woman can have. I hope she discovers that for herself, and for the rest, Gautam and I have her back, so she's got nothing to worry about!" **MB**

HO,
HO.

'Tis the season

....of food that warms the heart! And we're sharing our traditions with you...

By Krisella Fonseca

Growing up, the month of December meant the smell of cinnamon and sugar wafting through the house and greeting you in a single whiff, like a comforting hug. The entire month was spent churning out plum cakes to hand out to friends and family—a tradition that's taken the centerstage of our Christmas celebrations at home, even till today. The first day of Christmas vacation was set aside for baking cookies, followed by getting ourselves into a chocolate-y mess with some irresistible fudge. And because the weather demanded it, hot chocolate with marshmallows every now and then were just the icing on the cake. These goodies were straight out of Grandma's trusted Christmas recipe book, passed down to us through generations. It was not just like an instruction manual, but like a part of her was with us. As I'm wrapping up prep work for a much-awaited time of the year, I've decided to share my traditions with you, in the hope that they go on to become part of your celebrations too. With love, from Grandma!

Linzer cookies

YOU NEED

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup almond flour
- ½ cup butter at room temperature
- ¾ cup powdered sugar and more for dusting
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract or almond extract
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 cup strawberry jam

YOU MUST

- In a stand mixer or a mixing bowl, add all-purpose flour, almond flour, cinnamon, almond extract, salt, and powdered sugar and mix until it forms like a dough.
- Roll dough into a ball and transfer cover with a plastic wrap. Let it sit in the refrigerator for two hours or in the freezer for 15-20 minutes.
- Preheat oven at 350°F for 15-20 minutes. Remove the dough from the refrigerator and roll the dough between two sheets of parchment paper until it is ¼" thick.
- Use a cookie cutter to cut cookies in equal sizes. Also, make an inner cut-out in half of the cookies. Transfer prepared cookies to a baking sheet and bake for 10-12 minutes until the sides start to get brown. Let them cook completely then dust powdered sugar over half of the cookie that has inner cut-outs.
- Take two cookies (one normal & one with cut-out). Add 1 tsp of jam at the center of the cookie and sandwich by placing the cut-out cookie over the jam. Repeat the process for the rest of the cookies. Dust with powdered sugar.

PLUM CAKE

YOU NEED

- 1 3/4 cup flour
- 1 cup butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp cinnamon powder
- 1 tsp ground all spices
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3/4 cup water
- Zest of 1 orange
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 175 g raisins
- 200 g dried cranberries
- 200 g prunes
- 100 g dates
- 75 g chopped pecans
- Spices: Nutmeg, cloves, cardamom, dry ginger

YOU MUST

- In a medium saucepan, combine the butter with the raisins, cranberries, brown sugar and water and bring to a boil. Simmer over moderately high heat for three to four minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and let stand for 45 minutes or until it is cool.
- Add the eggs (lightly beaten) and vanilla extract(optional) and the nuts.
- Add in the flour mix which is flour+baking powder+salt+ground spices+zest of orange and lemon. Mix everything together, just until everything is well incorporated.
- Transfer the batter into the prepared seven or eight inch pan. Bake in the center of the oven at 320F for about 75-90 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. (A larger baking tray will take less time)
- Unmold the cake and transfer to a serving platter. This fruit cake is best to serve the next day. The flavor and texture of cake improves a lot with that time. The cake may seem buttery and crumbly and less flavorful if you cut it immediately once it is cooled.

CHOCOLATE FUDGE

YOU NEED

- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 20 ounces dark chocolate, finely chopped
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 teaspoon espresso powder

YOU MUST

- Line an 8x8-inch baking pan with parchment paper.
- Add the butter to a small saucepan and set over medium to medium-high heat. Stir occasionally until it foams, and turns slightly brown giving out a nutty smell. Watch carefully so that it does not burn. Remove from heat (it will brown a bit more as it sits) and transfer to a bowl.
- Melt the chocolate in a big bowl in short bursts in the microwave. Stir frequently until just melted (keep in mind that as you stir, the chocolate continues to melt).
- Add the browned butter, sweetened condensed milk, and espresso powder to the melted chocolate, and stir until combined. The mixture will become thick, like wet soil, as you stir.
- Transfer the thick mixture into the prepared pan and use a damp spatula to smooth over the top as needed.
- Cover and refrigerate for at least 90 minutes, until set and easily sliceable into 1x1-inch squares. If you're having trouble cutting through the chilled fudge, try using a warm knife—run it under hot water, then dry it off before slicing. This is best served at room temperature.

HOT CHOCOLATE

YOU NEED

- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- Marshmallows

YOU MUST

1. Melt the butter and whisk in corn starch
2. Add milk and sugar and mix it all together. Bring to a boil and simmer till it thickens. Keep continuously stirring
3. Lower the heat and add the chocolate while stirring continuously till melted
4. Pour in cups and top with a handful of marshmallows. **MB**

merry

PARTY HARD!

Kriselle Fonseca gives you sure-fire tips to ensure the apple of your eye is on her best behaviour at the next party.

By Kriselle Fonseca

The holiday party season is upon us, which means it's time for you to make a difficult decision. Do you check the "yes" box, the "no" box, or the "maybe" box on that party invite that's been waiting for an RSVP? You'd really like to go, your kid would love it, but her behaviour has been [illegible] the place to pre[illegible] the party might [illegible] the "maybe" box for now, [illegible] to decide, and thank [illegible] for the person who [illegible] the "maybe" box, who you're 100% sure, created the option for this exact situation.

We often don't like to take risks. However, a "wait and see" kind of attitude is, not only unnecessary, but also counter-productive. The truth is that while you may not have total control over how our children act in any given situation, there are several things you can do to increase the likelihood that they behave themselves, and while they're at it even have a good time!

1 GATHER PARTY INFO

Find out as much information as possible about the get-together you're planning to attend. Just how kid-friendly is the event? Are there any special activities planned? What kind of food will be available? For parents who have an easy, "go-with-the-flow" kind of tot, you may not need to ask many questions. For other parents, it might be necessary to know even the breed of dog the host owns! Either way, asking questions ahead of time ensures that you know what you're getting yourself (and our baby) into, and saves you from spending the whole time trying to appease an antsy child.

2 KNOW YOUR TOT

Do you have the kind of child that gets over-stimulated in the presence of a crowd? Or, are you the parent of a tyke who needs a lot of activity to stay on track? These are the kind of things that are not only helpful to know about your young ones, but also necessary to respect. When it comes down to it, there is only so much you can do as parents to shape your kids' behaviour—the rest is who they are. Knowing the difference between what you can change and what you need to accept "as is" and come prepared to handle, not only saves you unwanted headaches during the party season, but also make you better equipped as parents, for the rest of the time.

3 HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Knowing the details and respecting the general temperament of your child ensures that you don't throw her into the deep-end in a social situation they're not yet ready for. It helps you to have realistic expectations so that you don't set your kids up to disappoint, and have yourself feel frustrated. Don't expect her to be on her best behaviour throughout, especially if it's around naptime. Anticipate tantrums and crankiness, while also believing that your mini-me will have a good time too.

4 PREPARE YOUR CHILD

This means not waiting until the last minute, when your tot is immersed in her activities to tell her it's time to stop what she's doing, throw on her fancy clothes and go out. This not only ripens the situation for protest, but could potentially result in a flat-out refusal. Just how much lead-time should you give her to prepare? It depends upon her age and temperament, but always make sure you allow enough time to go over the ground rules before you arrive at the party.

5 GO OVER THE GROUND RULES

These are guidelines that help her understand how you, and the rest of the world, expects her to behave in a given social situation. Kids are not born knowing how to share or keep their hands to themselves, but need to be explicitly taught and constantly reminded. The kind of ground rules you set for your child depends upon both her age and temperament, but during the party season, it's often helpful to develop guidelines around the whole giving-and-receiving ritual. For example, if she behaves, she gets an extra 30 minutes of playtime, if she doesn't, playtime will be significantly reduced.

6 ANTICIPATE BOREDOM

With the advent of technological gadgets such as smart phones, MP3 players, tablets and laptops, kids today are more used to being entertained than ever before. This is another way of saying that today's generation doesn't handle boredom very well. The upshot for parents? Make sure you have a backup activity for your child, when she finds the function that you've taken her to less than thrilling. If you aren't a fan of having him constantly plugged-in, bring along a holiday craft, or a board game she can play with a friend.

7 LET THEM INDULGE, BUT DON'T OVER-DO IT

Although many of us tend to over-indulge during the holidays, allowing ourselves to consume more sugar than usual, it's important to keep mind that allowing kids to do the same has different consequences. The result of too much sugar on her tiny bodies affects her energy level, mood, concentration and overall behaviour, usually for the worse. So while it may be perfectly fine to let her have a few extra treats here and there, be prepared that it may mean having to do a little extra disciplining, here and there, too.

8 MODIFY, BUT DON'T DITCH THE ROUTINE

It's easy to let yourself veer off the routine over the holidays when you don't have to get up early for work or the kids don't have school. Often, you may let your tots skip their naps in exchange for some precious time with the relatives they haven't seen for a while. A word of caution: expecting a child to behave—not to mention—enjoy herself, when she is overtired, is impossible. Again, that doesn't mean you shouldn't ever alter the routine, it just means you need to be prepared to handle the consequences of doing so.

When it comes to the party season, it's okay to let your tiny tots (and yourself for that matter) let loose, relax and have a little fun. There's plenty of time for rules and routines during the rest of the year! **MB**

Rockin' Around

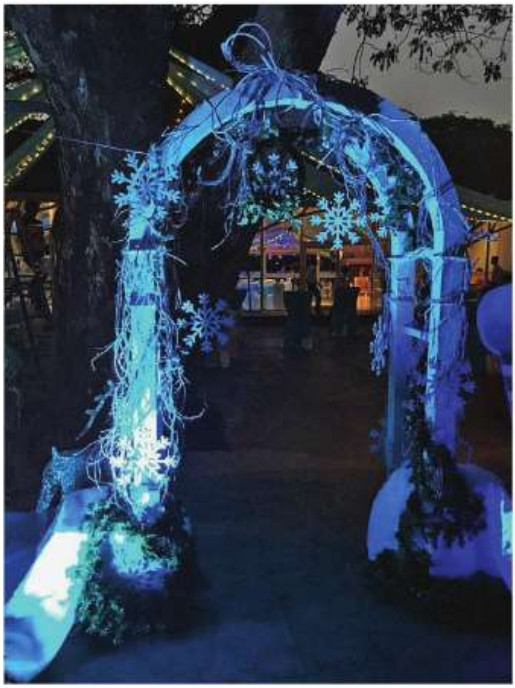
What's Christmas without a party to celebrate? The Drama Queen, a leading event planning company in Mumbai, shares their expert tips on hosting the perfect gathering, without burning a hole in your pocket

PLAN

Before you get down to business, it is important to have a clear picture of what you'd want your party to look like. First, decide on who your invitees are – is it a kiddie exclusive party? Adults only? Or is it going to be a fun for all event? Once that's decided, you then move on to the setting of your party. Having your celebration indoors or outdoors is largely subject to the COVID restrictions in your city. December weather is sweater weather, and while it may be pleasant in some city, some face harsh winters, and in such cases, an outdoor party might not be your best bet.

SET A BUDGET

If you're someone on a tight budget, the best way to avoid any chance of extra expenses is to limit your guests down to the least. For example, if your party is kids only, then you need not invite all the kids in your society or from your baby's circle. You can limit the friends to whom she most enjoys with. Technology has taken over and you can use it to your advantage to cut costs and be within budgets. Use it to create invites ,reminders and thank you messages, over making them personally or having them specially made. There are a number of free apps available to do this, which will cut time, cost and logistics over sending them to your guest



GLAM UP YOUR VENUE

Choose a location which is either free or inexpensive, which will suit the age and interest of your child, and where you can accommodate the number of guests being invited. Use DIY as your key idea for preparing activities and themes for decor. Work around ideas of what products are available easily at home, like chart paper lying around or colourful pieces of cloth that you can make something out of.

Try to source all items to be used for decor and activities from wholesalers, rather than just picking it up from near by retail outlets. Another great Idea is to intelligently decide and use second hand products wherever possible. These could be from your friends and family, or even hire props on a rental basis. However, make sure that these cause no harm to any child and have no negative effect on the look and feel of your party.

SORT FOOD AND DRINKS

Timing is a key factor to organising food and drink for your party. For example, having a lunch party will require more prep that calling friends over evening snack. Choose a setting that would limits items to be made and thereby cut costs. Plan the menu intelligently, choosing food items less elaborate but still what kids will enjoy. If your party involves kids in the age group under five years, you may wannt to introduce some healthy food options to your spread as well. Of course, it's the season to indulge, but be mindful of striking a balance, specially when it comes to kids.

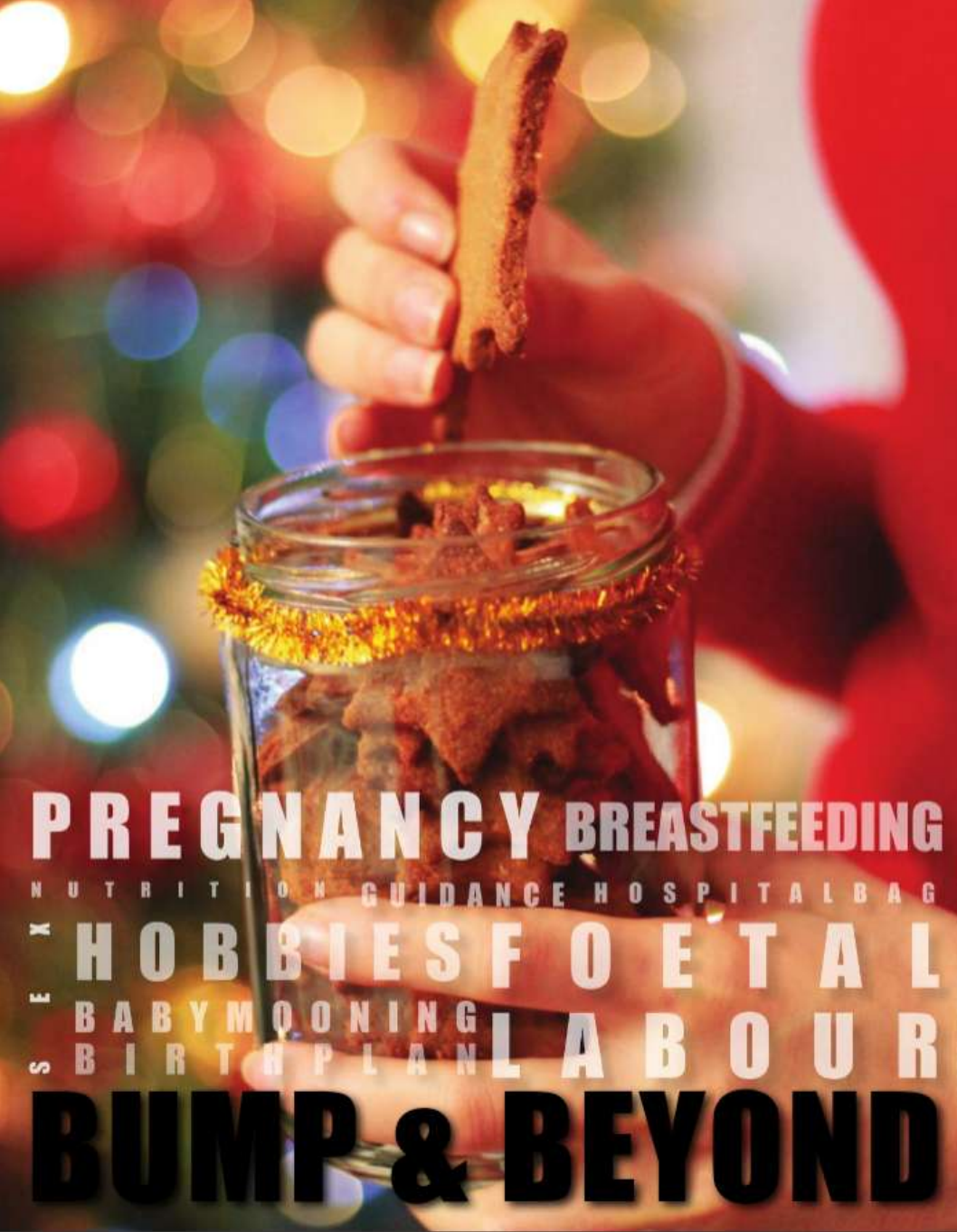
PLAY A GAME

All Parties don't always have to be mainly activity-based, and can be done around games. Popular abd fun options include musical chairs, Christmas housie, freeze dance, Christmas charades, find

Santa's hat (like a treasure hunt), snowball throw (aim marshmellows and candies in a bucket), building a marshmellow tower to see how many one can balance. You can also make arrangements for multiple board games where kids will havea choice to play. You could also screen a Christmas movie with some popcorn, which would be a great way to end your party.

BE SAFE

Before you begin your party, make the restrictions of the area clear to all. It always pays to have an extra set of hands from friends and family, for a kids' party. Keep a safety kit handy at all times, and if you have younger kids ar your party, make sure that there are no activities that require them to cook or use any hot gadgets or sharp utensils. All materials used in parties should be child-friendly. Ultimately, no celebration is complete without your personal touch to it. One thing that would make your celebration stand out is to include elements that represent yours or your child's personality. If your kid is fond of the Frozen franchise, you could have a Frozen themed Christmas party. **MB**


PREGNANCY
BREASTFEEDING
NUTRITION
GUIDANCE
HOSPITALBAG
SEX
HOBBIESFOETAL
BABYMOONING
BIRTHPLAN
LABOUR
BUMP & BEYOND

Testing times

Make sure that you get the required medical exams done before you plan your pregnancy...

As you plan to start your own family and step into the big, bad world of parenting, it is important to be prepared—emotionally and physically. Afertall, a healthy pregnancy translates into a healthy mum and a healthy baby Pre-natal testing (tests before pregnancy) are important as they serve two vital purposes—to provide information about fertility status, and to evaluate the mental and physical fitness of a woman's body to carry a child. It also helps prevent the likelihood of several pregnancy complications such as gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia, miscarriage, low birth weight, preterm delivery, and genetic disorders such as haemophilia.

Make sure that you go through the following assesments before you take the plunge into planned parenthood:

Age screening: One of the prerequisites for pregnancy is a physically and mentally fit body. The best period for conception is the late 20s and early 30s. However, with lifestyle changes and advances in medical technology, it is completely normal and healthy to conceive in your late 30s and early 40s. Just make sure that you have an experienced and supportive gynaecologist who can handhold you through the process.

Weight Evaluation: Pre-pregnancy weight is an important factor for a successful outcome. An underweight woman may face some difficulty in conceiving, and may suffer from anaemia. Babies born to underweight mums may have low birth weight. Women with pre-pregnancy obesity have a high risk of pre-eclampsia (hypertension) and gestational diabetes. Foetuses of obese womo en have a high risk of preterm birth and neural tube defects. Though the right medical care and guidance can help overcome some of these challenges, it is important to attain a healthy body weight with a clean lifestyle, food, and physical exercise before planning to conceive.

Gynaecological Screening: A comprehensive gynaecological evaluation can help to rule out any underlying condition that may affect conception and pregnancy. Some of the issues considered during screening include pelvic inflammatory disease, benign tumours, menstrual disorders, uterine fibroids, and cysts.

Urine Tests: The doctor may also advise undergoing urine tests to rule out the presence of urinary tract infections. These also help to rule out preeclampsia. Blood Pressure: It may be critical to keep a check on your blood pressure, and take medication if diet alterations and exercise are ineffective. High or low blood pressure during the pre-pregnancy phase may result in complications during pregnancy or at the time of delivery.

Contraception: Your doctor needs to know if you have been using any contraceptive in the past. Different methods have different duration of effects. This knowledge will help the doctor provide you with information about when your fertility rate returns to normal, and it is safe to plan pregnancy.

Past Complications: It is good to discuss past pregnancy complications such as stillbirth, miscarriage, or ectopic pregnancy. It will help the

doctor in deciding the precise treatment and care strategy right from the start.

Breast and Abdominal Examinations: The doctor may also examine the abdomen and pelvic region for any infection or structural anomalies. A breast examination may also be performed to ensure that there is no lump.

PAP Tests: This type of cervical screening is done to rule out the presence of sexually transmitted diseases, such as syphilis and gonorrhoea.

Blood Tests: Nutritional deficiencies such as folic acid, iron, and calcium deficiencies are very common in pregnancy, and associated with several complications for the mum and newborn. A blood test before pregnancy can identify such deficiencies so that they can be corrected with proper treatment to avoid complications. The doctor may also order routine blood tests to check for other conditions including thyroid disorder, toxoplasmosis, rubella, haemoglobin, Rh factor (this test helps to understand blood group compatibility of the mum and the baby), hepatitis B, and tuberculosis. The doctor may also advise hormonal testing to evaluate the level of reproductive hormones.

Mental Health Evaluation: Apart from the appropriate physical health, the to-be mum should be of sound mental health. The doctor will evaluate if a woman is suffering from depression, anxiety, and other mental disorders. The doctor may prescribe appropriate treatment to manage such conditions.

Blood disorders: Additional screening tests are performed when the reports of blood tests are abnormal. These tests rule out haemoglobinopathies.

HIV: It is recommended that you to undergo HIV tests too. HIV disease reduces the ability of the body to fight against infection. The pathogen may spread from the mum to the foetus during pregnancy.

Herpes: If there is a history of herpes infection in you or your partner, you should undergo a herpes test. This test is recommended even if you are not experiencing any symptoms.

GENETIC SCREENING

These tests help to understand the risk of having a baby born with birth defects or a genetic condition. The doctor will most likely recommend a genetic screening if:

- You are above 35 years of age
- you have certain medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, epilepsy, or an autoimmune disorder such as lupus
- you or your partner have a family history of genetic disease
- you have had multiple miscarriages
- you have a premature child or a baby born with a birth defect

DENTAL ASSESMENT

Although it is necessary to maintain dental hygiene at all times, it becomes vital now! Poor dental health during pregnancy may result in several complications, including infections and the need to take antibiotics. Further, the hormonal imbalances during pregnancy also increase the risk of gum problems. Oral diseases during expectancy result in preterm delivery and low birth weight. So it is advisable to visit a dentist to rule out any dental problems before planning a baby.

PRE-PREGNANCY VACCINATION

Vaccines are one of the most effective ways of affording protection against several deadly infectious diseases. Vaccines can also help to avoid infections and their related complications in pregnancy. For example, Rubella infection contracted in pregnancy may result in severe congenital conditions or miscarriages.

Make sure your vaccination record is up to date, and includes the following:

- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR). Avoid pregnancy for one month after MMR vaccination
- Hepatitis A and B
- COVID 19
- Varicella-zoster (chickenpox)
- Tetanus
- Human papillomavirus **MB**

10 Pregnancy promises every woman should make

It's New Year's resolutions time again. So now you've got the health of two people to think about, repeat after us: I vow to...

...GET MY HEAD AROUND GIVING BIRTH

How can we put this? It's probably going to hurt. Quite a bit. But the more you prepare for this labour lark, the better your experience will be. "Research shows mums who attend antenatal classes are more mentally and physically prepared and therefore have a better birth," says Sally Lomas, UK-based active birth teacher and co-director of Birthlight. She says, "Classes are the ideal place to practise positions and discuss emotions so you really believe your body can give birth."

...PACK MY BAG

Imagine you've not packed your bag. You go into early labour and turn up at hospital with nothing more than the clothes you're wearing! Not having your camera to take those first baby pictures is bad enough but now you've got to rely on your style-blind partner to pick out coming-home clothes. Not pretty, is it? So pack. Your. Bag. Maternity pads for when your waters break, a couple of nighties (one for labour and one for after) and a camera are essentials, but consider including a birth plan too. "If you make your preferences known on things like pain relief, your midwife or doctor can help you achieve them as much as possible," says Sally.

...STRESS LESS

Any woman who says she's not nervous about giving birth, becoming a mum or getting her figure back is lying. They're natural anxieties – that won't harm your baby. But research shows pregnant women with severe stress are more likely to have smaller babies and hyperactive children. Something as simple as keeping a diary could help. "Your emotional state can have a physical impact on your baby's development," says UK-based clinical hypnotherapist Maggie Howell. According to her, "Even jotting down concerns, like 'Will I get my figure back?' helps overcome emotional blockages."

...BE FIT TO POP

You wouldn't run a marathon without training, so don't put yourself through labour without a thought for fitness. Granted, you may not look your best in Lycra, but the benefits outweigh the shame with research revealing mums-to-be who exercise regularly have easier labours, deliveries and recoveries. And being fit helps limit those nasty pregnancy niggles. "Exercise is great for your circulation, cutting down on cramps, constipation, piles and swelling," says UK-bsed pregnancy fitness expert Alison Merry.

...MAKE SOME ME-TIME

Seriously, just stepping out the door is no mean feat once you're elbow deep in poo-filled nappies, so spoil yourself before baby bounces into your life. Shop for shoes. Meet your mates. Anything! Just think about you. "If you don't regularly carve out time for you, you could feel like you're losing your own identity," says UK-based relationship expert Gladeana McMahon. "Schedule in some pleasure. Paying yourself attention will make you feel feminine and valuable."

...MEET MY DOC. REGULARLY

The ordeal of having to pee in a pot might not make you feel like hotfooting it to your antenatal appointments, but the prospect of keeping you and baby healthy should. "These appointments are essential for monitoring progress," says Gail Johnson from The Royal College of Midwives, UK. "There should be no protein in your urine, your blood pressure must be monitored to rule out pre-eclampsia, and an eye must be kept on your baby's growth and position... all which contributes to a healthy pregnancy and better birth."

...HAVE A SIESTA

Or a lie in. Or an early night. Whatever, just get some sleep because giving birth and looking after a newborn takes energy. "Babies can't differentiate between day and night. If you practise grabbing naps now, once your baby arrives you'll be able to sleep when she sleeps," says Laura. Research reveals a 30 to 60 minute snooze can reduce fatigue and increase alertness in pregnant women, and those who get more than seven hours a night in late pregnancy have shorter labours. Duvets, please.

...SQUEEZE, TWO, THREE, FOUR

If the slightest sneeze has you peeing your pants, give your pelvic floor muscles a workout. "Exercising them during pregnancy helps you tone them up, preventing stress incontinence," says UK-based midwife Laura Abbott. "It also makes you more aware of the muscles, so you can relax them during labour," she says. If you're having trouble locating them, go for a pee and try to stop the flow for a few seconds by pulling the muscles up tightly. Now you know how, hold a pelvic floor contraction for 10 seconds. Doing eight in a row, three times a day, should have you toned in no time.

...DO DECENT UNDIES

Just because your flimsy thong can no longer stand the strain, don't start with the granny pants. Yes, they'll stretch as your bump blossoms, but they won't make you feel as sexy as bikini briefs or cute boxers sitting snugly under your tummy. As for bras, big (even AA cups get boobs!) can be beautiful. Just make sure they're sensible. "Ill-fitting and under-wired bras can damage delicate breast tissue, so get fitted for a maternity bra every six to eight weeks," says Gemma Essex, spokesperson for Royce lingerie, UK. "Your boobs contain no muscle, so go for good support – think wider shoulder and back straps – to limit sagging."

...LOWER MY STANDARDS

Listen, the world won't stop turning if you don't do the ironing, so let things go. "Setting yourself realistic standards limits stress. Growing a baby's your main job now so cut yourself some slack," says Gladeana. UK-based social psychologist Dr Sandra Wheatley agrees that "It's essential for your survival. Babies are programmed to demand attention so squirreling away some mental health now by relaxing, resting and accepting help will give you reserves to draw on once baby's here." **MB**

It's time to party!

Meet the EXPERT

M&B' panellist **Sonali Shivlani** is an Internationally Certified Pregnancy Consultant and a child nutrition counsellor. She is the executive director of CAPPA India, and also trains aspiring birth professionals to achieve certification in pregnancy, birth and lactation counselling.

2021 is coming to a close, and all the festivities will now commence. It is a time for the season of glitz and glam. If you are a mum-in-the-making, I am sure you want to go all out. After all, with baby on the cards, this Christmas or New Year's Eve could be your last hurrah for a long time to come. I don't blame you—most mums think so, and it is natural. But in trying to live up your last freedom bash, you should not let it affect your health. Here are some things to keep in mind as you let your hair down and party:

First and foremost, don't forget that COVID is still out there, so avoid crowded and enclosed places. Instead, plan for intimate parties with close family and friends to reduce your risk of exposure.

The second thing to keep in mind is rest. This is really important since your baby is growing at a very rapid pace, and ensuring enough rest and sleep is vital to this growth process. You may be tempted to pull an all-nighter or indulge in long travels, but that may not be the best idea during pregnancy. Plan for shorter events, so that you can get home, and comfortably curl up in your bed at the end of the day. If you are planning to travel, choose easy-to-reach destinations.

Which then brings us to the most important element of a party—food and drinks. Of course, I do not expect you to be Miss Goody Two-shoes, but you do have to be careful. Here are a few guidelines to keep in mind-

1 **BEVERAGES:** Let's face it: you have to be a teetotaller during pregnancy. Alcohol, in any amount, is best avoided, which means you will need to stick to the lesser evil. You also have to keep in mind that most of the aerated beverages are high in caffeine, and hence, should be consumed only in small quantities. Mocktails and other fruit-based beverages can be high in sugar as syrups are used instead of real fruit. Your best bet could a cool glass of iced lemonade, or chilled fresh fruit juice of your choice.

2 **SNACKS:** Most of the really interesting snack options are deep fried. Although, small portions of naughty foods can be considered okay, a full-on binge can result unhealthy consequences. Excess fried food can cause acidity and bloating, which can make you uncomfortable. You might want to pick pan-fried or roasted options as your snack of the evening.

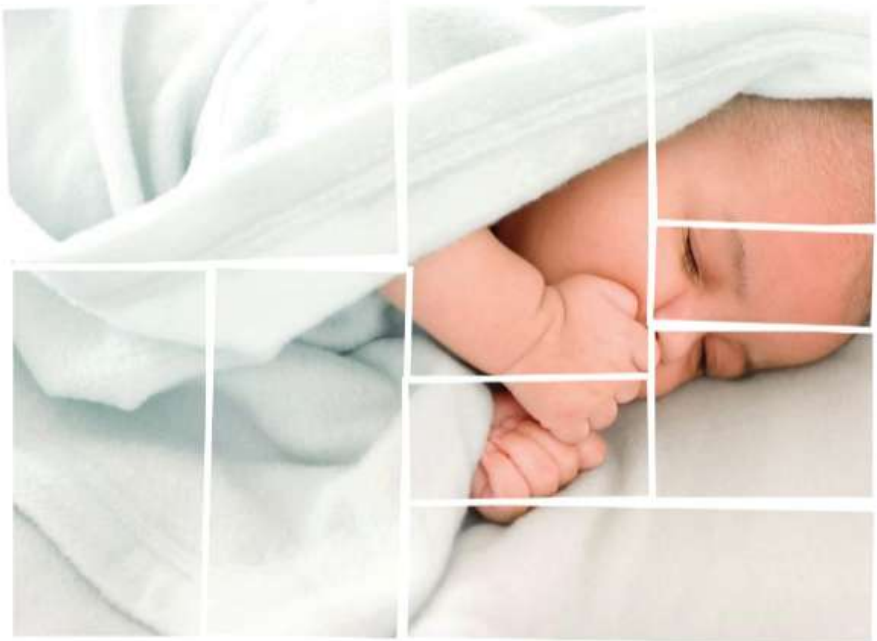
3 **MAIN COURSE:** Choosing fully cooked items would be ideal. Try and balance your plate by taking a whole wheat roti with some chicken or paneer, and some vegetables. Avoid buffets as these can contain stale food, and you also end up over-eating. Instead, have an a-la-carte meal, and aim for options as healthy as possible.

4 **DESSERTS:** Who can resist a little something sweet, especially around this time of the year? Many of my friends will proudly eat the snacks, skip the main course, and jump straight to dessert—which simply results in over-eating on the dessert table. Again, my advice would be to choose carefully. Many popular desserts—like chocolate mousse, caramel custard—may contain raw eggs that carry the risk of dangerous infections for your developing baby and therefore, must be avoided. A good idea is to share your dessert, so you would end up eating lesser. Smaller portions in desserts are always the goal.

5 **MOUTH FRESHENERS:** Most mouth fresheners are fennel or mint-based, and are safe during pregnancy. It's best to avoid paan though.

Having a good time and enjoying the festive season is a great idea. Just with a little bit of care and caution, you can ensure that your baby and pregnancy are healthy and safe. **M&B**

How to choose a blanket for your newborn



Not sure which baby blanket to pick? M&B helps you make the right choice

We wrap our children in love and in blankets. Every mother wants to find the perfect blanket to bring her infant home in, one to toss over the child to ward off a chill when they nap and another that the tot finds security or a familiar scent in. There are tons of throws and blankets available in the market, but here's how you can pick the very best according to child safety expert Swati Agarwal.

RIGHT MATERIAL

The material you choose should be gentle on the baby's sensitive skin and breathable to make sleep comfortable. Look for soft, washable materials like organic cotton and cotton fleece, and avoid anything synthetic. Lightweight and breathable muslin blankets are ideal for wrapping a newborn snug as a bug. Also, avoid using anything dense or scratchy. Wool can be a good choice during winters but avoid it until you are sure that your baby does not have an allergic reaction to the material. Even if you are buying a heavy baby blanket, make sure it is of a breathable material. Hold the blanket near the fan and see if air is passing through it.

PERFECT SIZE

A bulky, large blanket won't just work for your tiny bundle of joy. Baby blanket size is important – you want one that is big enough to keep baby warm, but not so big that the size overwhelms them. Standard blanket size is 45" by 60". A blanket this size has lots of versatility: it can be used as bedding, a floor mat, or even hung on the wall to decorate baby's nursery. If you want to wrap your baby, probably a bigger size blanket will be necessary. Alternatively, you could invest in a medium-sized blanket which covers your baby well, and keeps her warm during nights. In fact, a small and lightweight blanket allows for easy swaddling.

SAFE

Safety is absolutely essential when thinking about baby blankets. Do not buy blankets that have loose tassels, fringes, or ribbons; babies can get tangled in them. This becomes slightly less of an issue as baby gets older. Avoid buying blankets that have a hood and even if you do, don't make your baby wear the hood during sleep. Pulling the hood down can suffocate your child by restricting breathing. Refrain from buying blankets that have too much fur on them as these furs can come out lose and get into your baby's nostrils or mouth while breathing and lead to a choking episode.

SEASON-FRIENDLY

You also want to make sure that you are buying a blanket that is appropriate for the season. You'll want to have a heavier blanket for winter and a lighter one for summer. When you do purchase a heavier blanket for winter, do not get a quilt or one that is soft and heavy. These can contribute to SIDS – Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Keep in mind your local climate, too: you won't need as many thick blankets if you live in a warm climate, but if you live in a colder clime, you're going to want a thicker blanket to keep baby warm through the winter and beyond. **MB**

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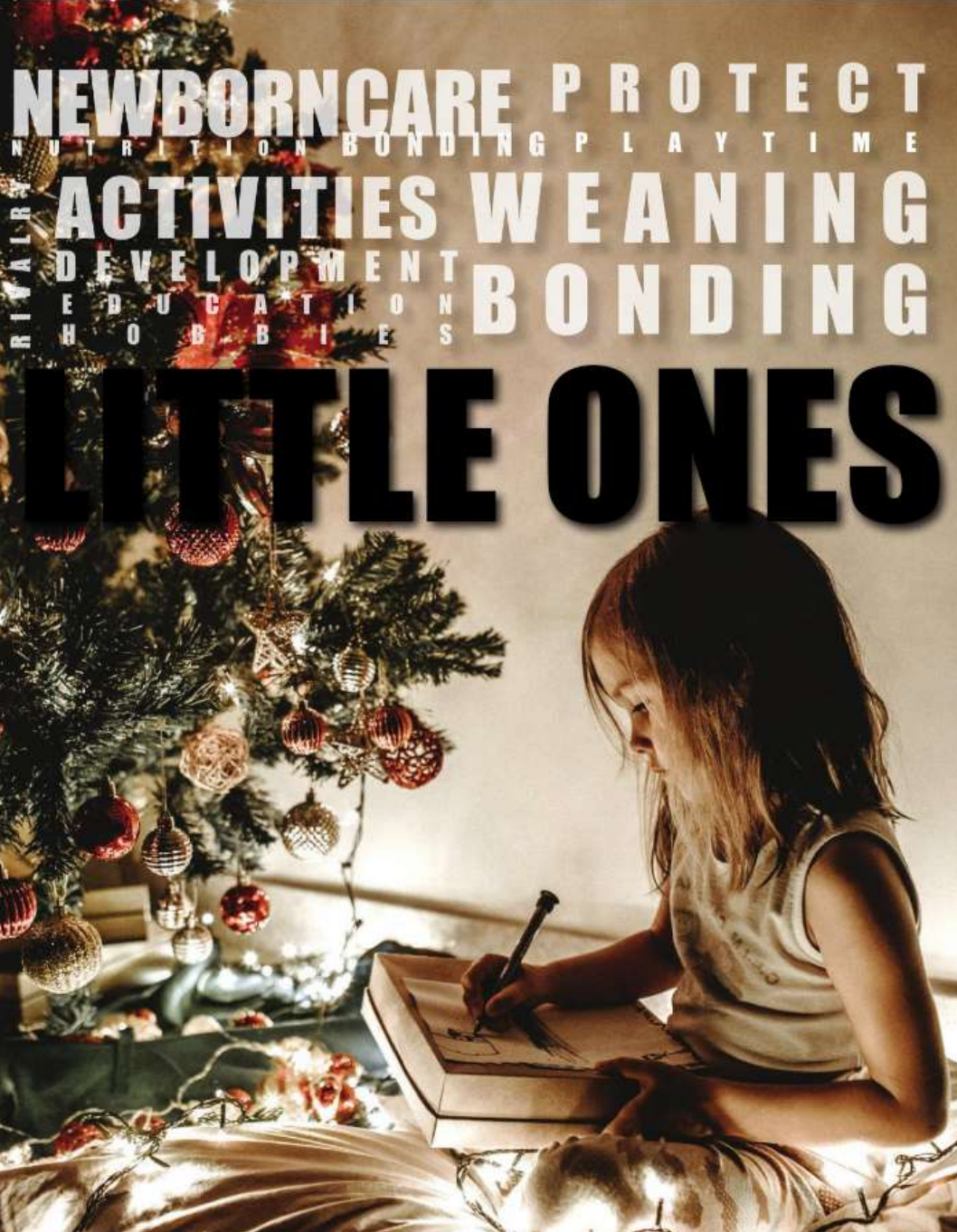
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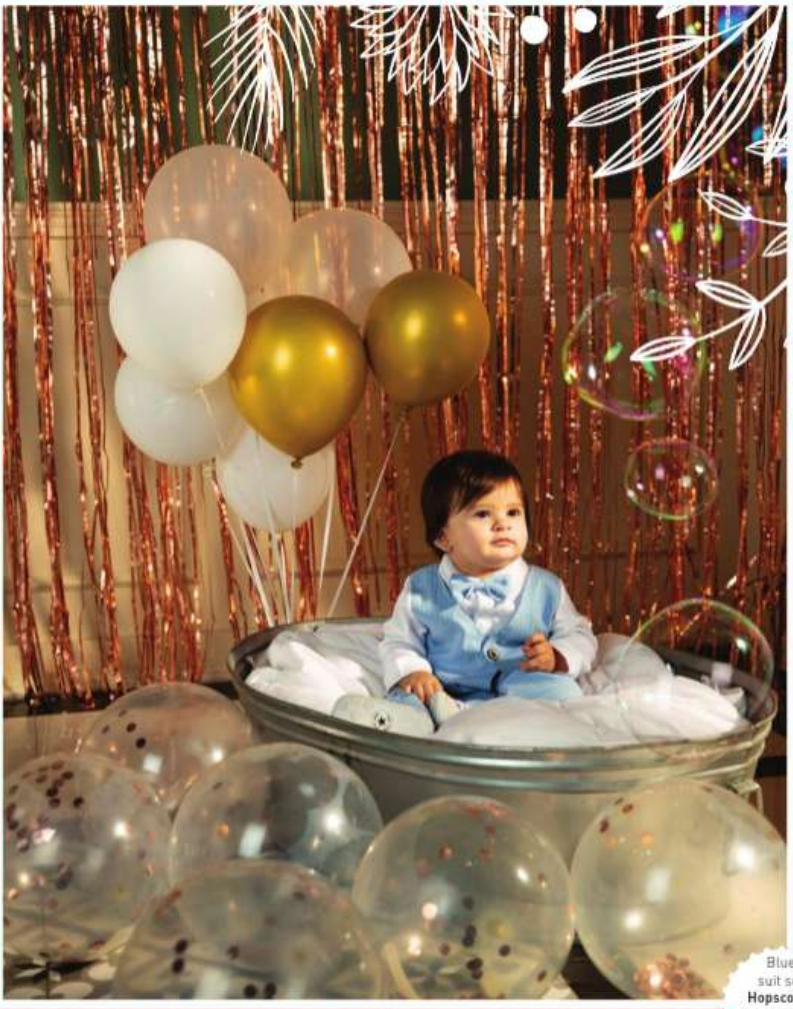

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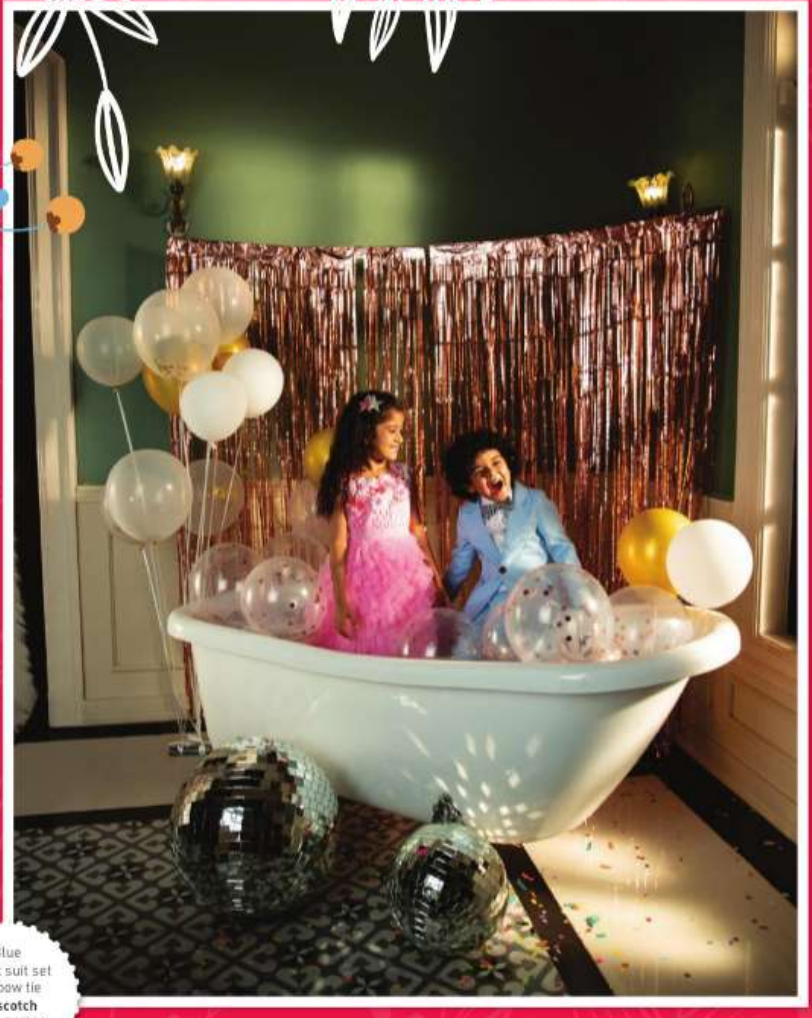

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Feed him healthy

These superhero nutrients will boost your baby's immune system to fight off germs, says nutritionist Sara Patience

MEET THE EXPERT

Sara Patience is a paediatric nutritionist and mum of three, nurtureand nourish.co.uk

If your baby enjoyed a happy, germ-free festive season, now is the perfect time to boost his immune system with a healthy diet before the bugs come back with the Indian heat. And you can do this very easily, by feeding him all the nutrients he needs to keep his infection-fighting system in tip-top condition. His immune system won't reach full maturity until he's around five years old, so giving it all the ingredients it needs to function well will help him stay healthy.

When he was born, the structure of your baby's immune system was already in place. But he's still busy building up the good bacteria in his digestive system and the antibodies he needs to fight off germs and stay well. Think of it as a newly built house, that still needs furnishing. As his body encounters germs through illness and vaccinations, he'll start to develop specific antibodies. But he'll develop most of his immunity between six months and three years, and what you feed him can really make a difference. Here's my guide to getting the biggest, immune-boosting nutrient hits in pint-sized portions…

INFECTION-FIGHTING IRON

Your baby needs iron to transport oxygen around his body to help fight infection. The store of iron he was born with only lasts six months, and as his body can't make iron, he'll need to get some from his food every day. If you can, give him iron in every meal—add a tablespoon of red meat wherever you can. If he's not keen, try blending it into a paste when you make a cottage pie or spaghetti bolognese. Dark poultry meat has far more iron than white, so another simple way to up the iron in your child's diet is to use thighs instead of breasts. Chickpeas are another good source: try mashing a tablespoon to make hummus, and serve with red pepper, as the vitamin C will help the iron be absorbed.

ORANGE TORNADO

Cut up strips of orange pepper and spread with cream cheese for a tasty vitamin A-rich snack.

CAPTAIN SARDINE

Mash a small avocado with a 120g tin of sardines to create a paste and spread on strips of toast for an omega 3 and vitamin C boost.

WORDS NIKKI DUTTON

ANTIBODY-BUILDING VITAMIN A

Vitamin A helps your youngster's body build infection-fighting antibodies and white blood cells to attack invading germs. Orange fruit and vegetables, such as carrots and satsumas, are rich in it, or a toddler's entire daily allowance can be found in just a third of a sweet potato—try making some tasty wedges by baking with a drizzle of olive oil.

CELL-PROTECTING VITAMIN C

Vitamin C is needed by white blood cells to fight infection as it protects cells and helps the healing process. Peppers, oranges and kiwi fruit pack a good vitamin C hit, or you could try making a fruit salad with guava, strawberries and kiwi. And it's good to know that the vitamin C content in frozen and canned fruit is just the same as in fresh.

BACTERIA-BOOSTER PROBIOTICS

Probiotics introduce beneficial bacteria to your baby's bowel and stomach, and by balancing out the bad bacteria, they'll boost the development of his immune system. Natural yoghurt contains plenty of probiotics, so offer him a teaspoonful every day, or add fruit to a pot to sweeten it.

HEALING VITAMIN B6

Vitamin B6 supports your baby's immune system by creating antibodies and helping red blood cells transport oxygen to aid the healing process. Good sources include wholemeal bread and pasta, and non-citrus fruit such as bananas. Once he's mastered finger foods, make him a batch of banana eggy bread for a double B6 blast: make a banana sandwich using one banana and two slices of wholemeal bread, then soak it in a mixture of egg, 75ml of milk and a pinch of cinnamon, and shallow fry in a knob of melted butter until golden.

WOUND-REPAIRING, CELL-BUILDING ZINC

To create the new cells and enzymes needed to support his immune system and heal wounds, your baby needs zinc. His body can't store this nutrient, so it's important to include plenty in his diet. Animal sources such as meat, eggs and dairy products contain more zinc than plants, with lamb containing the most. Try mixing 40g of lamb mince with an egg and breadcrumbs to make mini meatballs, and serve in a tomato sauce with a sprinkle of cheese for a zinc hit.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY OMEGA 3

The anti-inflammatory properties of omega 3 essential fatty acids will help your baby fight off illness. Oily fish contains high amounts, and salmon is the most baby-friendly option. Try fishcakes made with mashed tinned salmon and potatoes. Cook them in rapeseed oil, as this is also a good source of omega 3. Do check carefully for bones, though, and give boys no more than three portions of oily fish a week, and girls no more than two. Eggs with added omega 3 are a good alternative—cook an omelette sprinkled with cheese, making sure the egg is well cooked if your baby is under one. **MB**

INCREDIBLE LENTILS

Mix 90g of cooked rice and 20g of cooked red lentils together, then roll into small balls. They deliver a useful kick of iron and are just the right size for little ones to feed themselves.

BERRY BLAST

Blend a handful of frozen strawberries and some fresh spinach with two tablespoons of yoghurt to make a purée packed with iron and vitamin C.

DOCTOR PEANUT

Chicken and peanuts are both good sources of vitamin B6 and taste great together – give him strips of cooked chicken with a peanut butter dip.

THE BIG BANANA

One ripe banana contains your baby's recommended daily amount of vitamin B6 when he's six months old. Leave a banana in the freezer overnight, then blend it with milk and natural yoghurt for a dessert that tastes just like ice cream but without all the sugar.

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Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree!

Get creative with this rather festive DIY

By Aarti Pathak

My boys and I are always excited to get creative, and get our hands dirty. After the monsoon furniture revamp, we were eager to do some festive DIYs for Christmas in the winter break, and we decided to look for some easy, child-friendly activities. After looking up some craft ideas online, my boys were set on a Christmas tree, and we almost immediately, dove right in! Besides, when it's a simple Christmas Tree made from ribbons, why wait, right?

While selecting the ribbons we kept in mind the colours of the season; red, green and glitter. After collecting the materials for the tree, we began. I cut the first (and smallest) piece of ribbon and then gave it to them. I told them that they have to cut each successive piece of ribbon an inch longer than the previous one. My children are good with scissors and measurements so I did let them handle this part on their own. As they cut, they carefully placed the cut pieces of ribbons in order of increasing length so that it is easy for them to know which ribbon or string has to be tied next. The children had picked up lots of pencils and chose one that they liked the best. I showed them how to start tying the strings and after that they managed fine by themselves all the way till the end. They got their star sticker and put it on the top. Our Christmas tree looked merry!

The ribbons and strings are wavy so they don't stay in a straight line and hence it looks like our dainty tree is swaying happily. This activity though simple, does take time as one has to first cut the strings correctly and according to measurement and then the strings have to be tied and spaced properly. Also, the children had to work their little fingers carefully to make sure the knots are exactly aligned and that after being tied the ribbons are equal on both the left and right side.

But, that's the thing about spending time with children and engaging them in our days, lives, festivals and activities—it leaves them positively charged to do and think more, it leaves them happy, content and smiling. It builds trust and creates warm lasting memories. **MB**

So here's how you can get started

MATERIALS NEEDED

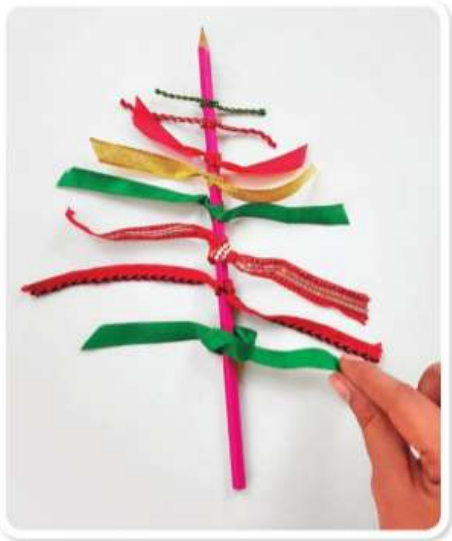
1. A pencil
2. Lots of colourful ribbons, string, laces
3. A sticker star
4. Scissor

Step-by-step process

1 Before involving your little ones, cut your strings into pieces of different sizes to be able to fashion them into a Christmas tree. Our smallest piece was half a inch long and every consecutive piece was kept an inch longer than the previous one.

Now get the children in and ask them to select the pencil of their choice. **2**

3 Tie the smallest string on top of the pencil.



4 Carefully pass the strings to the children one by one keeping the lengths in mind.

Once the strings are tied all the way to the end, take your star and place it on the top of the pencil. **5**

6 There! Your happy dancing tree is ready! **MB**

Starstruck!

Your baby's horoscope for the month

Aries

This month, your tot will be energetic and active, and certainly keep you on your toes. However, all this extra energy means that she'll need some fuel to keep up with it. Make sure you feed her healthy yummies, keep her hydration levels on point, and avoid processed foods and sugar. Now would be the best tome to introduce her to new games and activities since her interest levels will be at an all-time high.

Lucky Colour: Brown

Taurus

Your otherwise happy-go-lucky tot will be a little cranky this season. Activities that she otherwise used to delight in may seem uninteresting to her, and this can cause frustration and confusion. We suggest getting down to her level and engaging in her activities with her, to make it more fun and interactive. Keep a close eye on her health as she may be prone to the flu.

Lucky Colour: Pink

Gemini

This month, your li'l Gemini baby will need a whole lotta' lovin'. She'll want to constantly be smothered in your cuddles and attention, and it's best to take advantage of this before she grows out of it. However, mums, you'll have to find new activities to engage her in, to find what it is that makes her tick. You will also need to motivate and encourage her little achievements, afterall, ain't no cheerleader like her mama!

Lucky Colour: Green

Libra

'Tis the season of love and your li'l Libra babe feels no different! Steal all the cuddles and kisses you can, and at the same time, keep surprising her with fun new activities or loads of mommy-baby time. She might be a little stiff on the 'sharing is caring' virtue. So, sit her down and explain to her about giving her toys and activities to siblings or peers to play with. You could also keep her involved and get her creative juices flowing by engaging her in some puzzles.

Lucky Colour: Yellow

Scorpio

If you have two li'l ones at home, be prepared to melt into a puddle of love! They'll share all their toys and games with each other, enjoy playtime together and will bond with each other like never before. But you won't be left out of this cuddle party, mums—they'll want their mam to join in on all the games and activities, and this bonding time will give them a sense of security. So what are you waiting for? Steal all the extra kisses while you're at it!

Lucky Colour: Red

Sagittarius

It's time for a change this month, mums. Your munchkin will need you to switch up his routine and shuffle around a few things in his daily schedule. She'll look forward to her new routine and show significant enthusiasm for any new activities you have lined up. She will also want to spend time with her loved ones or any extended family members. She may turn a little aggressive overtime, but nothing a little down time can't cure!

Lucky Colour: Black

Vishakha Khanolkar Palav
is the Art Director for Mother & Baby India, a Commercial Artist and Photographer. She is also a Tarot Reader with a special focus on Numerology
email: vishgraphics@gmail.com

Cancer

Your baby will be very calm, composed and an absolute darling—the stuff all your mummy dreams are made of! However, her energy levels might be on the down side this month. It no cause for too much concern, just make sure she's well-hyrdeated, and fill her up on a whole lot of nutritious fruit and veg drinks. Be cautious of her health especially during the climate change.
Lucky Colour: Purple

Leo

Your li'l one will need some extra special care this month. Your otherwise happy-go-lucky tot may be a bit cranky and distracted. However, there's no need to be alarmed, just give her your undivided attention and she should be back to her jolly self in no time. Keep a watch out for her feeding habits and be mindful of giving her healthy, well-balanced meals, as she is prone to tummy upsets this season.
Lucky Colour: Grey

Virgo

Brace yourself for a care-free, fuss-free month ahead—no tantrums, mealtime meltdowns or night time niggles—this is what mommy dreams are made of. She'll listen to everything you say and show you an obedient, mama's baby side unlike ever before. She'll keep you on your toes, but at the same time, she'll display a sense of understanding if you forbid her from doing certain things. Now's the best time to introduce a new activity for her to engage with.
Lucky Colour: Red

Capricorn

Your Capricorn baby will be very energetic this month, and you will need to help her keep up with it too. These energy levels will be the highest in the AM, so it's best to make the most of it through some physical activity like yoga. You could also take her outside in the morning so that she can soak in some much-needed vitamin D. Keep her well hydrated or else she might be fatigued every now and then.
Lucky Colour: White

Aquarius

Your tiny aquarian will be a total water babe this month. She'll be more than thrilled to kick her li'l swimmers in the pool or at the beach. The days ahead will see her observe, interact and be one with nature. Whether it's the birds in the sky or the sun in her eye, she'll be all fired up! Now's the best time to take a short trip that allows her to experience and engage with her surroundings. And while she's at it, she'll also be increasingly focused and attentive of her environment.
Lucky Colour: Sea Blue

Pisces

Your tot will want to be surrounded by companions during her playtime. This could be you, your family members or her peers. Considering organising a socially distanced play date for her to get excited by. You could also enroll her for baby yoga or any other activity class that will allow her to meet and make new friends. You might also want to consider getting her a new toy to play with, one that is engaging and intellectually stimulating.
Lucky Colour: Fresh Green

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